



PRESS RELEASE

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WCMA Explores the Evolution of Queer Aesthetics and Photography December 14, 2018 to April 14, 2019

Images available upon request.

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Williamstown, Mass.—Rarely does an exhibition find itself in the position of defining the visual terms of a global conversation. The artists and works featured in the Williams College Museum of Art's (WCMA) new exhibition, [*possible selves: queer fotovernaculars*](#), play a pivotal role in the global discourse concerning the impact of portraiture and self-fashioning on the evolution of queer identities. On view from December 14, 2018 to April 14, 2019, the exhibition explores issues surrounding aesthetics, authenticity, and political understandings of postmodern desire.

An opening reception featuring a polaroid selfie photo-op and a series of hip-hop and vogue performances by Williams student Quess Green '20, will be held on December 13, at 5:30 p.m.

Spanning 60 years of art and vernacular photography—from a 1953 candid photo of Jack Kerouac taken by Allen Ginsberg to recent selfies on Instagram—*possible selves* brings together 65 works from WCMA's collection with 200 images from social media to elucidate queer collective action across national, temporal, and generational divides. The exhibition draws on the critical writings of academic and philosopher José Esteban Muñoz (1967-2013) and the poetry of Emily Dickinson to define queer self-identification as both an aesthetic and political act.

"This exhibition speaks to WCMA's long history as an innovative laboratory for contemporary curatorial practice and the museum's practice of teaching with objects of art and design," says WCMA Director Pamela Franks. "Our mission to incite new thinking in the field compels us to respond to campus-wide conversations and these extraordinary times with an exhibition that examines the evolution of queer aesthetics and photography over the past six decades."

Ambitious in scale and rigorous in its attention to the ways queer digital portraiture circulates and accrues influence, the WCMA exhibition frames queer experiences of transition, translation, transgression, and transcendence through intergenerational shifts in language and visual culture. Illicit, humorous, tender, confessional, violent, and irreverent, the photographs on view in *possible selves* remix and re-frame the limits between public and private, intimacy and formality, truth and the performance of self.

“*possible selves* is the first exhibition to link the voices and experiences of queer folk around the world to the evolution of an art genre,” says Assistant Curator Horace D. Ballard, organizing curator for the show. “In breaking down the barriers between snapshots, selfies, and art, the exhibition equates queer portraiture with political action. My hope is that the audacity of the work inspires visitors to build more inclusive, equitable, and inquisitive communities.”

Williams College Museum of Art

The Williams College Museum of Art makes dynamic art experiences to incite new thinking about art, museums, and the world. At the heart of the Williams College campus the museum draws on the collaborative and multidisciplinary ethos of the surrounding college to enliven the more than 15,000 works in its growing collection. The museum and its collection are a catalyst for student learning and community engagement. WCMA is located on Main Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The museum is open 10 am to 5 pm, Thursdays 10 am to 8 pm, and closed Wednesdays September through May. In June, July, and August WCMA is open every day 10 am – 5 pm and 10 am – 8 pm on Thursdays. WCMA is free and open to all. For more information, contact the museum at 413-597-2429 or visit wcma.williams.edu.

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